

GRACO INC
Form 10-K
February 16, 2016

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549
FORM 10-K

Annual Report Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 for the fiscal year ended December 25, 2015, or

Transition report pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 for the transition period from _____ to _____
Commission File No. 001-09249

Graco Inc.

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

Minnesota

41-0285640

(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)

(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

88 –11th Avenue Northeast

Minneapolis, MN 55413

(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)

(612) 623-6000

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Common Stock, par value \$1.00 per share

Shares registered on the New York Stock Exchange.

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act:

None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data file required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer" and "accelerated filer" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act (Check one):

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer Smaller reporting company

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined by Rule 12b-2 of the Act). Yes No

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The aggregate market value of 56,999,055 shares of common stock held by non-affiliates of the registrant was \$4,128,441,586 as of June 26, 2015.

55,115,889 shares of common stock were outstanding as of February 2, 2016.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Portions of the Company's definitive Proxy Statement for its Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held on April 22, 2016, are incorporated by reference into Part III, as specifically set forth in said Part III.

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ON FORM 10-K

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ACCESS TO REPORTS

Investors may obtain access free of charge to the Graco Inc. Annual Report on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, other reports and amendments to the reports by visiting the Graco website at www.graco.com. These reports will be available as soon as reasonably practicable following electronic filing with, or

furnishing to, the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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PART I

Item 1. Business

Graco Inc., together with its subsidiaries (“Graco,” “us,” “we,” or “our Company”), is a multi-national manufacturing company. We design, manufacture and market equipment used to pump, meter, mix and dispense fluid and powder materials. Our equipment is used in construction, automotive, mining, oil and natural gas, process, public works and other industries. Graco is a Minnesota corporation and was incorporated in 1926.

We specialize in providing equipment solutions for difficult-to-handle materials with high viscosities, abrasive or corrosive properties, and multiple component materials that require precise ratio control. We aim to serve niche markets, providing high customer value through product differentiation. Our products enable customers to reduce their use of labor, material and energy, improve quality and achieve environmental compliance.

We make significant investments in developing innovative, high quality products. We strive to grow into new geographic markets by strategically adding commercial resources and third party distribution in growing and emerging markets. We have grown our third party distribution to have specialized experience in particular end-user applications. We leverage our product technologies for new applications and industries.

We also make targeted acquisitions to broaden our product offering, enhance our capabilities in the end-user markets we serve and expand our manufacturing and distribution base. In 2015, we completed a number of acquisitions in the Industrial and Process segments and two acquisitions in early fiscal 2016. These acquisitions provided new products, such as an expanded high pressure valve line, ultra high purity diaphragm pumps and mortar pumps, as well as additional channel partners and manufacturing capabilities.

We have particularly strong manufacturing, engineering and customer service capabilities that enhance our ability to provide premium customer experience, produce high quality and reliable products and drive ongoing cost savings.

Our investment in new products, targeted acquisitions and strong manufacturing, engineering and customer service capabilities comprise our long-term growth strategies, which we coordinate and drive across our geographic regions. Values central to our identity - growth, product innovation, premium customer service, quality and continuous improvement - are leveraged to integrate and expand the capabilities of acquired businesses.

We classify our business into three reportable segments, each with a worldwide focus: Industrial, Contractor and Process. Financial information concerning these segments is set forth in Part II, Item 7, Results of Operations and Note B (Segment Information) to the Consolidated Financial Statements of this Form 10-K.

Beginning with the first quarter of 2015, we revised the presentation of our financial reporting segments. Operations of the Process and the Oil and Natural Gas divisions, historically included in the Industrial segment, are now aggregated with the Lubrication division (formerly reported as a separate segment) in the newly-formed Process segment. This change aligns the types of products and markets served within the segments. Prior year segment information has been restated to conform to 2015 reporting.

Each segment sells its products in North, Central and South America (the “Americas”), Europe, Middle East and Africa (“EMEA”), and Asia Pacific. Sales in the Americas represent approximately 59 percent of our Company’s total sales. Sales in EMEA represent approximately 23 percent. Sales in Asia Pacific represent approximately 18 percent. Part II, Item 7, Results of Operations and Note B (Segment Information) to the Consolidated Financial Statements of this Form 10-K contain financial information about these geographic markets. We provide marketing and product design in each of these geographic regions. Our Company also provides application assistance to distributors and employs

sales personnel in each of these geographic regions.

For information about our Company and our products, services and solutions, visit our website at www.graco.com. The information on the website is not part of this report nor any other report filed or furnished to the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”).

Manufacturing and Distribution

We manufacture a majority of our products in the United States. We manufacture some of our products in Switzerland (Industrial segment), the United Kingdom (Process segment), the People’s Republic of China (“P.R.C.”) (all segments), Belgium (all segments), Romania (Industrial segment) and Brazil (Industrial segment). Our manufacturing is aligned with our business segments and is co-located with product development to accelerate technology improvements and improve our cost structure. We perform critical machining, assembly and testing in-house for most of our products to control quality, improve response time and maximize cost-

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effectiveness. We make our products in focused factories and product cells. We source raw materials and components from suppliers around the world.

For all segments, we primarily sell our equipment through third party distributors worldwide, positioned throughout our geographic regions, and through selected retailers. Our products are sold from our warehouse to our third party distributors or retailers who sell our products to end-users. Certain of our acquired businesses historically sold their products directly to end-user customers and continue to have direct relationships with customers.

Outside of the United States, our subsidiaries located in Australia, Belgium, Japan, Italy, Korea, the P.R.C., Singapore and the United Kingdom distribute our Company's products. Operations in Maasmechelen, Belgium; St. Gallen, Switzerland; Shanghai, P.R.C.; and Montevideo, Uruguay reinforce our commitment to their regions.

During 2015, manufacturing capacity met business demand. Production requirements in the immediate future are expected to be met through existing facilities, the installation of new automatic and semi-automatic machine tools, efficiency and productivity improvements, the use of leased space and available subcontract services. We are evaluating alternatives to expand existing facilities by acquiring or leasing future additional space for our Contractor segment, which is nearing capacity at its existing facility in Rogers, Minnesota. For more details on our facilities, see Item 2, Properties.

Product Development

Our primary product development efforts are carried out in facilities located in Minneapolis, Anoka and Rogers, Minnesota; North Canton, Ohio; St. Gallen, Switzerland; Suzhou, P.R.C.; Dexter, Michigan; Erie, Pennsylvania; Kamas, Utah; and Brighouse, United Kingdom. The product development and engineering groups focus on new product design, product improvements, new applications for existing products and technologies for their specific customer base. Our product development efforts focus on bringing new and supplemental return on investment value to end users of our products.

Our Company consistently makes significant investments in new products. Total product development expenditures for all segments were \$59 million in 2015, \$54 million in 2014 and \$51 million in 2013. The amounts invested in product development represented approximately 4½ percent of sales in each of the last three years. Our product development activities are focused both on upgrades to our current product lines to provide features and benefits that will provide a return on investment to our end-user customers and development of products that will reach into new industries and applications to incrementally grow our sales. Sales of products that refresh and upgrade our product lines are measured and compared with actual results. Sales of products that provide entry into new industries and applications are also measured, with additional focus on commercial resources and activities to build specialized third party distribution and market acceptance by end users.

Our Company measures the results of acquired businesses as compared to historical results and projections made at the time of acquisition. Our Company will invest in engineering, manufacturing and commercial resources for these businesses based on expected return on investment.

Business Segments

Industrial Segment

The Industrial segment is our largest segment and represents approximately 48 percent of our total sales in 2015. It includes the Industrial Products and Applied Fluid Technologies divisions. The Industrial segment markets equipment and pre-engineered packages for moving and applying paints, coatings, sealants, adhesives and other fluids. Markets

serviced include automotive and vehicle assembly and components production, wood and metal products, rail, marine, aerospace, farm, construction, bus, recreational vehicles and various other industries.

Most Industrial segment equipment is sold worldwide through specialized third party distributors, integrators, design centers, original equipment manufacturers and material suppliers. Some products are sold directly to end users. We work with material suppliers to develop or adapt our equipment for use with specialized or hard-to-handle materials. Distributors promote and sell the equipment, hold inventory, provide product application expertise and offer on-site service, technical support and integration capabilities. Integrators implement large individual installations in manufacturing plants where products and services from a number of different manufacturers are aggregated into a single system. Design centers engineer systems for their customers using our products. Original equipment manufacturers incorporate our Company's Industrial segment products into systems and assemblies that they then supply to their customers.

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Applied Fluid Technologies

The Applied Fluid Technologies division designs and sells equipment for use by industrial customers and specialty contractors. This equipment includes two component proportioning systems that are used to spray polyurethane foam (spray foam) and polyurea coatings. Spray foam is commonly used for insulating building walls, roofs, water heaters, refrigerators, hot tubs and other items. Polyurea coatings are applied on storage tanks, pipes, roofs, truck beds, concrete and other items. We offer a complete line of pumps and proportioning equipment that sprays specialty coatings on a variety of surfaces for protection and fireproofing. This division also manufactures vapor-abrasive blasting equipment, as well as equipment that pumps, meters, mixes and dispenses sealant, adhesive and composite materials. Our advanced composite equipment includes gel coat equipment, chop and wet-out systems, resin transfer molding systems and applicators. This equipment bonds, molds, seals, vacuum encapsulates, and laminates parts and devices in a wide variety of industrial applications.

Industrial Products

The Industrial Products division makes finishing equipment that applies paint and other coatings to products such as motor vehicles, appliances, furniture and other industrial and consumer products. A majority of this division's business is outside of North America.

This division's products include liquid finishing equipment that applies liquids on metals, wood and plastics. This equipment includes paint circulating and paint supply pumps, paint circulating advanced control systems, plural component coating proportioners, various accessories to filter, transport, agitate and regulate fluid, and spare parts such as spray tips, seals and filter screens. We also offer a variety of applicators that use different methods of atomizing and spraying the paint or other coatings depending on the viscosity of the fluid, the type of finish desired and the need to maximize transfer efficiency, minimize overspray and minimize the release of volatile organic compounds into the air. Manufacturers in the automotive, automotive feeder, commercial and recreational vehicle, military and utility vehicle, aerospace, farm, construction, wood and general metals industries use our liquid finishing products.

We make powder finishing products that coat powder finishing on metals. These products are sold under the Gema® trademark. Gema powder systems coat window frames, metallic furniture, automotive components and sheet metal. Primary end users of our powder finishing products include manufacturers in the construction, home appliance, automotive component and custom coater industries. We strive to provide innovative solutions in powder coating for end users in emerging and developed markets.

Process Segment

The Process segment represented approximately 21 percent of our total sales in 2015. It includes our Process, Oil and Natural Gas, and Lubrication divisions. The Process segment markets pumps, valves, meters and accessories to move and dispense chemicals, oil and natural gas, water, wastewater, petroleum, food, lubricants and other fluids. Markets served include food and beverage, dairy, oil and natural gas, pharmaceutical, cosmetics, semi-conductor, electronics, wastewater, mining, fast oil change facilities, service garages, fleet service centers, automobile dealerships and industrial lubrication applications.

Most Process segment equipment is sold worldwide through third party distributors and original equipment manufacturers. Some products are sold directly to end users, particularly in the oil and natural gas and semi-conductor industries.

Process

Our Process division makes pumps of various technologies that move chemicals, water, wastewater, petroleum, food and other fluids. Manufacturers and processors in the food and beverage, dairy, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, oil and natural gas, semi-conductor, electronics, wastewater, mining and ceramics industries use these pumps. This division makes environmental monitoring and remediation equipment that is used to conduct ground water sampling and ground water remediation, and for landfill liquid and gas management.

Subsequent to the 2015 fiscal year-end, we acquired Geotechnical Instruments (U.K.) Limited, which makes portable and fixed gas analyzers for landfill, biogas and medical applications and has facilities in the United Kingdom. Also subsequent to 2015 year-end, we purchased Landtec North America, Inc., which produces landfill gas wellheads and has facilities in the United States. These two companies will supplement our product line serving the environmental monitoring and remediation market.

Oil and Natural Gas

Our Oil and Natural Gas division has recently launched a new line of chemical injection pumping solutions for precise injection of chemicals into producing oil wells and pipelines. We also make high pressure and ultra-high pressure valves used in the oil and natural gas industry, other industrial processes and research facilities.

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Our line of chemical injection pumping solutions is sold through third party distributors. Our high and ultra-high pressure valves are sold directly to end-user customers as well as through distribution worldwide.

Lubrication

The Lubrication division designs and sells equipment for use in vehicle servicing. We supply pumps, hose reels, meters, valves and accessories for use by fast oil change facilities, service garages, fleet service centers, automobile dealerships, auto parts stores, truck builders and heavy equipment service centers.

We also offer systems, components and accessories for the automatic lubrication of bearings, gears and generators in industrial and commercial equipment, compressors, turbines and on- and off-road vehicles. Automatic lubrication systems reduce maintenance need and down time and extend the life of the equipment. Industries served include gas transmission, petrochemical, pulp and paper, mining, construction, agricultural equipment, food and beverage, material handling, metal manufacturing, wind energy and oil and natural gas.

Contractor Segment

The Contractor segment represented approximately 31 percent of our total sales in 2015. Through this segment, we offer sprayers that apply paint to walls and other structures, with a range of product models that can be used by do-it-yourself homeowners to professional painting contractors. We also make sprayers that apply texture to walls and ceilings, and sprayers that apply highly viscous coatings to roofs. Contractor equipment also includes sprayers that apply markings on roads, parking lots, athletic fields and floors.

This segment's end users are primarily professional painters in the construction and maintenance industries, tradesmen and do-it-yourselfers. Contractor products are marketed and sold in all major geographic areas. We continue to add distributors throughout the world that specialize in the sale of Contractor products. Throughout the world, we are pursuing a broad strategy of converting contractors accustomed to manually applying paint and other coatings by brush-and-roller to spray technology.

Our Contractor products are distributed primarily through distributor outlets whose main products are paint and other coatings. Certain sprayers and accessories are distributed globally through the home center channel. Contractor products are also sold through general equipment distributors outside of North America.

Raw Materials

The primary materials and components in our products are steel of various alloys, sizes and hardness; specialty stainless steel and aluminum bar stock, tubing and castings; tungsten carbide; electric and gas motors; injection molded plastics; sheet metal; forgings; powdered metal; hoses; electronic components and high performance plastics, such as polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE). The materials and components that we use are generally adequately available through multiple sources of supply. To manage cost, we source significant amounts of materials and components from outside the United States, primarily in the Asia Pacific region.

In 2015, our raw material and purchased component availability was strong, and our costs declined slightly in all major commodity categories, particularly in aluminum, stainless steel, carbon steel bar stock, plastics and copper.

We endeavor to address fluctuations in the price and availability of various materials and components through adjustable surcharges and credits, close management of current suppliers, price negotiations and an intensive search for new suppliers. We have performed risk assessments of our key suppliers, and we factor the risks identified into our commodity plans.

Intellectual Property

We own a number of patents across our segments and have patent applications pending in the United States and other countries. We also license our patents to others and are a licensee of patents owned by others. In our opinion, our business is not materially dependent upon any one or more of these patents or licenses. Our Company also owns a number of trademarks in the United States and foreign countries, including registered trademarks for “GRACO,” “Gema,” several forms of a capital “G,” and various product trademarks that are material to our business, inasmuch as they identify Graco and our products to our customers.

Sales to Major Customers

Worldwide sales in the Contractor and Industrial segments to The Sherwin-Williams Company represented 10 percent of the Company’s consolidated sales for 2015. There were no customers that accounted for 10 percent or more of consolidated sales in 2014.

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Competition

We encounter a wide variety of competitors that vary by product, industry and geographic area. Each of our segments generally has several competitors. Our competitors are both U.S. and foreign companies and range in size. We believe that our ability to compete depends upon product quality, product reliability, innovation, design, customer support and service, specialized engineering and competitive pricing. Although no competitor duplicates all of our products, some competitors are larger than our Company, both in terms of sales of directly competing products and in terms of total sales and financial resources. We also face competitors with different cost structures and expectations of profitability and these companies may offer competitive products at lower prices. We may have to refresh our product line and continue development of our distribution channel to stay competitive. We are also facing competitors who illegally sell counterfeits of our products or otherwise infringe on our intellectual property rights. We may have to increase our intellectual property and unfair competition enforcement activities.

Environmental Protection

Our compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations did not have a material effect upon our capital expenditures, earnings or competitive position during the fiscal year ended December 25, 2015.

Employees

As of December 25, 2015, we employed approximately 3,200 persons. Of this total, approximately 1,350 were employees based outside of the United States, and 950 were hourly factory workers in the United States. None of our Company's United States employees are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. Various national industry-wide labor agreements apply to certain employees in various countries outside of the United States. Compliance with such agreements has no material effect on our Company or our operations.

Acquisition and Divestiture of Liquid Finishing Businesses

In April 2012, the Company purchased the finishing businesses of Illinois Tool Works Inc. The acquisition included finishing equipment operations, technologies and brands of the Powder Finishing and Liquid Finishing businesses. Results of the Powder Finishing businesses have been included in the Industrial segment since the date of acquisition.

Under terms of a hold separate order from the Federal Trade Commission, the Company did not have the power to direct the activities of the Liquid Finishing businesses that most significantly impacted the economic performance of those businesses. Consequently, we reflected our investment in the Liquid Finishing businesses as a cost-method investment on our balance sheet, and their results of operations were not consolidated with those of the Company. Dividends received from after-tax earnings of the Liquid Finishing businesses were included in our statements of earnings as investment income.

In April 2015, the Company sold the Liquid Finishing business assets. Net earnings in 2015 included after-tax gain on the sale and dividends totaling \$141 million (\$2.40 per diluted share). Dividends included in investment income totaled \$28 million in 2014 and \$28 million in 2013. No further Liquid Finishing dividends will be received.

Item 1A. Risk Factors

Growth Strategies and Acquisitions - Our growth strategies may not provide the return on investment desired if we are not successful in implementation of these strategies.

Making acquisitions, investing in new products, expanding geographically and targeting new industries are among our growth strategies. We may not obtain the return on investment desired if we are not successful in implementing these growth strategies. The success of our acquisitions strategy depends on our ability to successfully identify suitable acquisition candidates, negotiate appropriate acquisition terms, obtain financing at a reasonable cost, prevail against competing acquirers, complete the acquisitions and integrate or add the acquired businesses into our existing businesses or corporate structure. Once successfully integrated into our existing businesses or added to our corporate structure, the acquired businesses may not perform as planned, be accretive to earnings, generate positive cash flows or otherwise be beneficial to us. We may not realize projected efficiencies and cost-savings from the businesses we acquire. We cannot predict how customers, competitors, suppliers and employees will react to the acquisitions that we make. Acquisitions may result in the assumption of undisclosed or contingent liabilities, the incurrence of increased indebtedness and expenses, and the diversion of management's time and attention away from other business matters. We make significant investments in developing products that have innovative features and differentiated technology in their industries and in niche markets. We are adding to the geographies in which we do business with third party distributors. We cannot predict whether and when we will be able to realize the expected financial results and accretive effect of the acquisitions that we make, the new products that we develop and the channel expansions that we make.

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Economic Environment - Demand for our products depends on the level of commercial and industrial activity worldwide.

An economic downturn or financial market turmoil may depress demand for our equipment in all major geographies and markets. If our distributors and original equipment manufacturers are unable to purchase our products because of unavailable credit or unfavorable credit terms, depressed end-user demand, or are simply unwilling to purchase our products, our net sales and earnings will be adversely affected. An economic downturn may affect our ability to satisfy the financial covenants in the terms of our financing arrangements.

Currency - Changes in currency translation rates could adversely impact our revenue and earnings.

Changes in exchange rates will impact our reported sales and earnings. A majority of our manufacturing and cost structure is based in the United States. In addition, decreased value of local currency may make it difficult for some of our distributors and end users to purchase products.

Changes in Laws and Regulations - Changes may impact how we can do business and the cost of doing business around the world.

The speed and frequency of implementation and the complexity of new or revised laws and regulations globally appear to be increasing. In addition, as our business grows and/or geographically expands, we may become subject to laws and regulations previously inapplicable to our business. These laws and regulations increase our cost of doing business, may affect the manner in which our products will be produced or delivered and may impact our long-term ability to provide returns to our shareholders.

Anti-Corruption Laws - We may incur costs and suffer damages if our employees, agents, distributors or suppliers violate anti-bribery, anti-corruption or trade laws and regulations.

Bribery, corruption and trade laws and regulations, and enforcement thereof, is increasing in frequency, complexity and severity on a global basis. The continued geographic expansion of our business increases our exposure to, and cost of complying with, these laws and regulations. If our internal controls and compliance program do not adequately prevent or deter our employees, agents, distributors, suppliers and other third parties with whom we do business from violating anti-corruption laws, we may incur defense costs, fines, penalties, reputational damage and business disruptions.

Intellectual Property - Demand for our products may be affected by new entrants who copy our products and/or infringe on our intellectual property. Competitors may allege that our products infringe the intellectual property of others.

From time to time, we have been faced with instances where competitors have infringed or unfairly used our intellectual property and/or taken advantage of our design and development efforts. The ability to protect and enforce intellectual property rights varies across jurisdictions. Competitors who copy our products are becoming more prevalent in Asia. If we are unable to effectively meet these challenges, they could adversely affect our revenues and profits and hamper our ability to grow. Competitors and others may also initiate litigation to challenge the validity of our intellectual property or allege that we infringe their intellectual property. We may be required to pay substantial damages if it is determined our products infringe their intellectual property. We may also be required to develop an alternative, non-infringing product that could be costly and time-consuming, or acquire a license (if available) on terms that are not favorable to us. Regardless of whether infringement claims against us are successful, defending against such claims could significantly increase our costs, divert management's time and attention away from other

business matters, and otherwise adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

Foreign Operations - Conducting business internationally exposes our Company to risks that could harm our business.

In 2015, approximately 49 percent of our sales were generated by customers located outside the United States. We are increasing our presence in advancing economies. Operating and selling outside of the United States exposes us to certain risks that could adversely impact our sales volume, rate of growth or profitability. These risks include: complying with foreign legal and regulatory requirements; international trade factors (export controls, trade sanctions, duties, tariff barriers and other restrictions); protection of our proprietary technology in certain countries; potentially burdensome taxes; potential difficulties staffing and managing local operations; and changes in exchange rates.

Competition - Our success depends upon our ability to develop, market and sell new products that meet our customers' needs, and anticipate industry changes.

Our profitability will be affected if we do not develop new products and technologies that meet our customers' needs. Our ability to develop, market and sell products that meet our customers' needs depends upon a number of factors, including anticipating the

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features and products that our customers will need in the future, identifying and entering into new markets, and training our distributors. Changes in industries that we serve, including consolidation of competitors and customers, could affect our success. Price competition and competitor strategies could negatively impact our growth and have an adverse impact on our results of operations.

Suppliers - Risks associated with foreign sourcing, supply interruption, delays in raw material or component delivery, supply shortages and counterfeit components may adversely affect our production or profitability.

We continue to source certain of our materials and components from suppliers outside the United States, and from suppliers within the United States who engage in foreign sourcing. Long lead times or supply interruptions associated with a global supply base may reduce our flexibility and make it more difficult to respond promptly to fluctuations in demand or respond quickly to product quality problems. Changes in exchange rates between the U.S. dollar and other currencies and fluctuations in the price of commodities may impact the manufacturing costs of our products and affect our profitability. Protective tariffs, unpredictable changes in duty rates, and trade regulation changes may make certain foreign-sourced parts no longer competitively priced. Long supply chains may be disrupted by environmental events or other political factors. Raw materials may become limited in availability from certain regions. Port labor disputes may delay shipments. We source a large volume and a variety of electronic components, which exposes us to an increased risk of counterfeit components entering our supply chain. If counterfeit components unknowingly become part of our products, we may need to stop delivery and rebuild our products. We may be subject to warranty claims and may need to recall products.

Security Breaches - Intrusion into our information systems may impact our business.

Security breaches or intrusion into our information systems, and the breakdown, interruption in or inadequate upgrading or maintenance of our information processing software, hardware or networks may adversely affect our business. Security breaches or intrusion into the systems or data of the third parties with whom we conduct business may also harm our business.

Impairment - If acquired businesses do not meet performance expectations, assets acquired could be subject to impairment.

Our total assets reflect goodwill from acquisitions, representing the excess cost over the fair value of the identifiable net assets acquired. We test annually whether goodwill has been impaired, or more frequently if events or changes in circumstances indicate the goodwill may be impaired. If future operating performance at one or more of our operating units were to fall significantly below forecast levels or if market conditions for one or more of our acquired businesses were to decline, we could be required to incur a non-cash charge to operating income for impairment. Any impairment in the value of our goodwill would have an adverse non-cash impact on our results of operations and reduce our net worth.

Political Instability - Uncertainty surrounding political leadership may limit our growth opportunities.

Domestic political instability, including government shut downs, may limit our ability to grow our business. International political instability may prevent us from expanding our business into certain geographies and may also limit our ability to grow our business. Civil disturbances may harm our business.

Legal Proceedings - Costs associated with claims, litigation, administrative proceedings and regulatory reviews, and potentially adverse outcomes, may affect our profitability.

As our Company grows, we are at an increased risk of being a target in matters related to the assertion of claims and demands, litigation, administrative proceedings and regulatory reviews. We also may be exposed to litigation, claims for indemnification or other claims relating to acquisitions or the divestiture of the liquid finishing business assets under the asset purchase agreement with Carlisle Companies Incorporated, Carlisle Fluid Technologies, Inc., and Finishing Brands Holdings Inc. as we were required to make certain representations and warranties about a business we never operated based solely on representations made to us in our purchase of that business. We may also need to pursue claims or litigation to protect our interests. The cost of pursuing or defending such matters appears to be increasing, particularly in the United States. Such costs may adversely affect our Company's profitability. Our businesses expose us to potential toxic tort, product liability and commercial claims. Successful claims against the Company and settlements may adversely affect our results.

Major Customers - Our Contractor segment depends on a few large customers for a significant portion of its sales. Significant declines in the level of purchases by these customers could reduce our sales and impact segment profitability.

Our Contractor segment derives a significant amount of revenue from a few large customers. Substantial decreases in purchases by these customers, difficulty in collecting amounts due or the loss of their business would adversely affect the profitability of this segment. The business of these customers is dependent upon the economic vitality of the construction and home improvement

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markets. If these markets decline, the business of our customers could be adversely affected and their purchases of our equipment could decrease.

Variable Industries - Our success may be affected by variations in the construction, automotive, mining and oil and natural gas industries.

Our business may be affected by fluctuations in residential, commercial and institutional building and remodeling activity. Changes in construction materials and techniques may also impact our business. Our business may also be affected by fluctuations of activity in the automotive, mining and oil and natural gas industries.

Personnel - Our success may be affected if we are not able to attract, develop and retain qualified personnel.

Our success depends in large part on our ability to identify, recruit, develop and retain qualified personnel. If we are unable to successfully identify, recruit, develop and retain qualified personnel, it may be difficult for us to meet our strategic objectives and grow our business, which could adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

Catastrophic Events - Our operations are at risk of damage, destruction or disruption by natural disasters and other unexpected events.

The loss of, or substantial damage to, one of our facilities or the facilities of our suppliers could make it difficult to supply our customers with product and provide our employees with work. Flooding, tornadoes, typhoons, unusually heavy precipitation or other severe weather events, earthquakes, fire, explosions or acts of war or terrorism could adversely impact our operations.

Item 1B. Unresolved Staff Comments

None.

Item 2. Properties

Our facilities are in satisfactory condition, suitable for their respective uses, and are generally adequate to meet current needs. A description of our principal facilities as of February 16, 2016, is set forth in the chart below. Facilities are used by all segments, unless otherwise noted.

Facility	Owned or Square		Facility Activities
	Leased	Footage	
North America			
Dunnville, Ontario, Canada	Leased	3,200	Manufacturing for Industrial segment
Tlalnepantla, State of Mexico, Mexico	Leased	4,000	Manufacturing, warehouse and office for Industrial segment
Colton, California, United States	Leased	10,450	Manufacturing and warehouse for Process segment
San Leandro, California, United States	Leased	13,500	Manufacturing, warehouse and office for Process segment
Indianapolis, Indiana, United States	Owned	64,000	Warehouse, office, product development and application laboratory for Industrial segment
Dexter, Michigan, United States	Leased	52,600	Manufacturing, warehouse, office and product development for Process segment
Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States	Owned	141,000	

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			Corporate office; office and product development for Industrial and Process segments
Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States	Owned	42,000	Corporate office
Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States	Owned	391,000	Manufacturing and office for Industrial and Process segments
Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States	Owned	86,700	Assembly for Industrial and Process segments
Anoka, Minnesota, United States	Owned	208,000	Manufacturing, warehouse, office and product development for Process segment
Rogers, Minnesota, United States	Owned	325,000	Manufacturing, office and product development for Contractor segment
Rogers, Minnesota, United States	Leased	225,000	Warehouse and office

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North Canton, Ohio, United States	Owned	132,000	Manufacturing, warehouse, office, product development and application laboratory for Industrial segment
Erie, Pennsylvania, United States	Leased	43,000	Manufacturing, warehouse, office and product development for Process segment
Sioux Falls, South Dakota, United States	Owned	147,500	Manufacturing and office for Industrial and Contractor segments
Houston, Texas, United States	Leased	4,500	Warehouse and office for Process segment
Kamas, Utah, United States	Leased	21,000	Manufacturing and office for Process segment
Chesapeake, Virginia, United States	Leased	9,600	Manufacturing, warehouse and office for Process segment
South America			
Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil	Leased	4,000	Manufacturing, office and product development for Industrial segment
Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil	Leased	2,900	Manufacturing and warehouse for Industrial segment
Uruguay Free Zone, Montevideo, Uruguay	Leased	1,800	Office
Europe			
Maasmechelen, Belgium	Owned	127,000	Warehouse, office and assembly; European training, testing and education center
Valence, France	Leased	3,900	Office for Industrial segment
Rödermark, Germany	Leased	8,600	Warehouse and office for Industrial segment
Milan, Italy	Leased	7,500	Office and warehouse for Industrial segment
Sibiu, Romania	Leased	51,200	Manufacturing for Industrial segment
St. Gallen, Switzerland	Owned	79,000	Manufacturing, warehouse, office, product development and application laboratory for Industrial segment
St. Gallen, Switzerland	Leased	9,000	Manufacturing for Industrial segment
Poole, Dorset, United Kingdom	Leased	3,500	Office and warehouse for Industrial segment
Denton, Manchester, United Kingdom	Leased	2,500	Manufacturing, warehouse and office for Industrial segment
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, United Kingdom	Leased	7,300	Manufacturing, warehouse, office and product development for Process segment
Brighouse, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom	Owned	64,400	Manufacturing, warehouse, office and product development for Process segment
Brighouse, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom	Leased	18,000	Manufacturing, warehouse, office and product development for Process segment
Brighouse, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom	Leased	10,800	Manufacturing, warehouse and office for Process segment
Brighouse, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom	Leased	6,000	Warehouse for Process segment
Warwickshire, United Kingdom	Leased	31,100	Manufacturing, warehouse and office for Process segment
Asia Pacific			
Bundoora, Australia	Leased	2,500	Office
Derrimut, Australia	Leased	16,100	Warehouse
Shanghai, P.R.C.	Leased	29,000	Office; Asia Pacific training, testing and education center
	Leased	30,700	Warehouse

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Shanghai Waiqaoqiao Pilot Free Trade
Zone, P.R.C.

Shanghai, P.R.C.	Leased	26,400	Office and warehouse for Industrial segment
Suzhou, P.R.C.	Owned	81,400	Manufacturing, warehouse, office and product development
Yokohama, Japan	Leased	29,000	Office and warehouse
Boon Lay Way, Singapore	Leased	2,100	Warehouse and office for Process segment
Anyang, South Korea	Leased	5,100	Office
Gwangjoo, South Korea	Leased	10,700	Warehouse

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Item 3. Legal Proceedings

Our Company is engaged in routine litigation, administrative proceedings and regulatory reviews incident to our business. It is not possible to predict with certainty the outcome of these unresolved matters, but management believes that they will not have a material effect upon our operations or consolidated financial position.

Item 4. Mine Safety Disclosures

Not applicable.

Executive Officers of Our Company

The following are all the executive officers of Graco Inc. as of February 16, 2016:

Patrick J. McHale, 54, became President and Chief Executive Officer in June 2007. He served as Vice President and General Manager, Lubrication Equipment Division from June 2003 to June 2007. He was Vice President, Manufacturing and Distribution Operations from April 2001 to June 2003. He served as Vice President, Contractor Equipment Division from February 2000 to April 2001. From September 1999 to February 2000, he was Vice President, Lubrication Equipment Division. Prior to September 1999, he held various manufacturing management positions in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Plymouth, Michigan; and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Mr. McHale joined the Company in 1989.

David M. Ahlers, 57, became Vice President, Human Resources and Corporate Communications in April 2010. From September 2008 through March 2010, he served as the Company's Vice President, Human Resources. Prior to joining Graco, Mr. Ahlers held various human resources positions, including, most recently, Chief Human Resources Officer and Senior Managing Director of GMAC Residential Capital, from August 2003 to August 2008. He joined the Company in 2008.

Caroline M. Chambers, 51, became Vice President, Corporate Controller and Information Systems in December 2013. She has also served as the Company's principal accounting officer since September 2007. From April 2009 to December 2013, she was Vice President and Corporate Controller. She served as Vice President and Controller from December 2006 to April 2009. She was Corporate Controller from October 2005 to December 2006 and Director of Information Systems from July 2003 through September 2005. Prior to becoming Director of Information Systems, she held various management positions in the internal audit and accounting departments. Prior to joining Graco, Ms. Chambers was an auditor with Deloitte & Touche in Minneapolis, Minnesota and Paris, France. Ms. Chambers joined the Company in 1992.

Mark D. Eberlein, 55, became Vice President and General Manager, Process Division in January 2013. From November 2008 to December 2012, he was Director, Business Development, Industrial Products Division. He was Director, Manufacturing Operations, Industrial Products Division from January to October 2008. From 2001 to 2008, he was Manufacturing Operations Manager of a variety of Graco business divisions. Prior to joining Graco, Mr. Eberlein worked as an engineer at Honeywell and at Sheldahl. He joined the Company in 1996.

Karen Park Gallivan, 59, became Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary in September 2005. She was Vice President, Human Resources from January 2003 to September 2005. Prior to joining Graco, she was Vice President of Human Resources and Communications at Syngenta Seeds, Inc. from January 1999 to January 2003. From 1988 through January 1999, she was the general counsel of Novartis Nutrition Corporation. Prior to joining Novartis, Ms. Gallivan was an attorney with the law firm of Rider, Bennett, Egan & Arundel, L.L.P. She joined the Company in 2003.

Dale D. Johnson, 61, became Vice President and General Manager, Contractor Equipment Division in April 2001. From January 2000 through March 2001, he served as President and Chief Operating Officer. From December 1996 to January 2000, he was Vice President, Contractor Equipment Division. Prior to becoming the Director of Marketing, Contractor Equipment Division in June 1996, he held various marketing and sales positions in the Contractor Equipment division and the Industrial Equipment division. He joined the Company in 1976.

Jeffrey P. Johnson, 56, became Vice President and General Manager, EMEA in January 2013. From February 2008 to December 2012 he was Vice President and General Manager, Asia Pacific. He served as Director of Sales and Marketing, Applied Fluid Technologies Division, from June 2006 until February 2008. Prior to joining Graco, he held various sales and marketing positions, including, most recently, President of Johnson Krumwiede Roads, a full-service advertising agency, and European sales manager at General Motors Corp. He joined the Company in 2006.

David M. Lowe, 60, became Executive Vice President, Industrial Products Division in April 2012. From February 2005 to April 2012, he was Vice President and General Manager, Industrial Products Division. He was Vice President and General Manager, European

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Operations from September 1999 to February 2005. Prior to becoming Vice President, Lubrication Equipment Division in December 1996, he was Treasurer. Mr. Lowe joined the Company in 1995.

Bernard J. Moreau, 55, became Vice President and General Manager, South and Central America in January 2013. From November 2003 to December 2012, he was Sales and Marketing Director, EMEA, Industrial/Automotive Equipment Division. From January 1997 to October 2003, he was Sales Manager, Middle East, Africa and East Europe. Prior to 1997, he worked in various Graco sales engineering and sales management positions, mainly to support Middle East, Africa and southern Europe territories. He joined the Company in 1985.

Peter J. O'Shea, 51, became Vice President and General Manager, Lubrication Equipment Division in January 2016. From January 2013 to December 2015, he was Vice President and General Manager, Asia Pacific. From January 2012 until December 2012, he was Director of Sales and Marketing, Industrial Products Division, and from 2008 to 2012, he was Director of Sales and Marketing, Industrial Products Division and Applied Fluid Technologies Division. He was Country Manager, Australia - New Zealand from 2005 to 2008, and from 2002 to 2005 he served as Business Development Manager, Australia - New Zealand. Prior to becoming Business Development Manager, Australia - New Zealand, he worked in various Graco sales management positions. Mr. O'Shea joined the Company in 1995.

Charles L. Rescorla, 64, became Vice President, Corporate Manufacturing, Distribution Operations and Corporate Development in December 2013. From June 2011 to December 2013, he was Vice President, Corporate Manufacturing, Information Systems and Distribution Operations. He was Vice President, Manufacturing, Information Systems and Distribution Operations from April 2009 to June 2011. He served as Vice President, Manufacturing and Distribution Operations from September 2005 to April 2009. From June 2003 to September 2005, he was Vice President, Manufacturing/Distribution Operations and Information Systems. From April 2001 until June 2003, he was Vice President and General Manager, Industrial/Automotive Equipment Division. Prior to April 2001, he held various positions in manufacturing and engineering management. Mr. Rescorla joined the Company in 1988.

Christian E. Rothe, 42, became Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer in September 2015. From June 2011 to August 2015, he was Vice President and Treasurer. Prior to joining Graco, he held various positions in business development, accounting and finance, including, most recently, at Gardner Denver, Inc., a manufacturer of highly engineered products, as Vice President, Treasurer from January 2011 to June 2011, Vice President - Finance, Industrial Products Group from October 2008 to January 2011, and Director, Strategic Planning and Development from October 2006 to October 2008. Mr. Rothe joined the Company in 2011.

Mark W. Sheahan, 51, became Vice President and General Manager, Applied Fluid Technologies Division in February 2008. He served as Chief Administrative Officer from September 2005 until February 2008, and was Vice President and Treasurer from December 1998 to September 2005. Prior to becoming Treasurer in December 1996, he was Manager, Treasury Services. He joined the Company in 1995.

Brian J. Zumbolo, 46, became Vice President and General Manager, Asia Pacific in January 2016. From August 2007 to December 2015, he was Vice President and General Manager, Lubrication Equipment Division. He was Director of Sales and Marketing, Lubrication Equipment and Applied Fluid Technologies, Asia Pacific, from November 2006 through July 2007. From February 2005 to November 2006, he was the Director of Sales and Marketing, High Performance Coatings and Foam, Applied Fluid Technologies Division. Mr. Zumbolo was the Director of Sales and Marketing, Finishing Equipment from May 2004 to February 2005. Prior to May 2004, he held various marketing positions in the Industrial Equipment division. Mr. Zumbolo joined the Company in 1999.

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PART II

Item 5. Market for Registrant's Common Equity, Related Shareholder Matters and Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities

Graco Common Stock

Graco common stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol "GGG." As of February 2, 2016, the share price was \$69.06 and there were 55,115,889 shares outstanding and 2,424 common shareholders of record, which includes nominees or broker dealers holding stock on behalf of an estimated 54,000 beneficial owners.

High and low sales prices for the Company's common stock and dividends declared for each quarterly period in the past two years were as follows:

	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
2015				
Stock price per share				
High	\$82.14	\$74.48	\$73.49	\$77.55
Low	70.01	69.78	63.44	65.36
Dividends declared per share	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.33
2014				
Stock price per share				
High	\$78.97	\$77.82	\$79.88	\$81.93
Low	65.18	70.39	72.29	67.06
Dividends declared per share	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.30

The graph below compares the cumulative total shareholder return on the common stock of the Company for the last five fiscal years with the cumulative total return of the S&P 500 Index and the Dow Jones US Industrial Machinery Index over the same period (assuming the value of the investment in Graco common stock and each index was \$100 on December 31, 2010, and all dividends were reinvested).

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Dow Jones US Industrial Machinery	100	95	116	170	168	147
S&P 500	100	102	118	157	178	181
Graco Inc.	100	106	134	208	221	203

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Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities

On September 14, 2012, the Board of Directors authorized the Company to purchase up to 6,000,000 shares of its outstanding common stock, primarily through open-market transactions. This authorization expired on September 30, 2015. On April 24, 2015, the Board of Directors authorized the purchase of up to an additional 6,000,000 shares over an indefinite period of time or until terminated by the Board.

In addition to shares purchased under the Board authorization, the Company purchases shares of common stock held by employees who wish to tender owned shares to satisfy the exercise price or tax withholding on stock option exercises.

Information on issuer purchases of equity securities follows:

Period	Total Number of Shares Purchased	Average Price Paid per Share	Total Number of Shares Purchased as Part of Publicly Announced Plans or Programs	Maximum Number of Shares that May Yet Be Purchased Under the Plans or Programs (at end of period)
September 26, 2015 - October 23, 2015	422,440	\$67.28	422,440	4,729,579
October 24, 2015 - November 20, 2015	—	\$—	—	4,729,579
November 21, 2015 - December 25, 2015	150,155	\$69.29	150,155	4,579,424

Item 6. Selected Financial Data

Graco Inc. and Subsidiaries (in thousands, except per share amounts)

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Net sales	\$1,286,485	\$1,221,130	\$1,104,024	\$1,012,456	\$895,283
Net earnings	345,713	225,573	210,822	149,126	142,328
Per common share					
Basic net earnings	\$6.00	\$3.75	\$3.44	\$2.47	\$2.36
Diluted net earnings	5.86	3.65	3.36	2.42	2.32
Cash dividends declared	1.23	1.13	1.03	0.93	0.86
Total assets	\$1,391,352	\$1,544,778	\$1,327,228	\$1,321,734	\$874,309
Long-term debt (including current portion)	392,695	615,000	408,370	556,480	300,000

Net sales in 2012 included \$93 million from Powder Finishing operations acquired in April 2012. The Company used long-term borrowings and available cash balances to complete the \$668 million purchase of Powder Finishing and Liquid Finishing businesses in 2012.

Net earnings in 2015 include \$141 million from the sale of the Liquid Finishing businesses acquired in 2012 and held as a cost-method investment. Proceeds from the sale were principally used to retire debt.

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Item 7. Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations

The following Management's Discussion and Analysis reviews significant factors affecting the Company's consolidated results of operations, financial condition and liquidity. This discussion should be read in conjunction with our financial statements and the accompanying notes to the financial statements. The discussion is organized in the following sections:

- Overview
- Divestiture
- Acquisitions
- Results of Operations
- Segment Results
- Financial Condition and Cash Flow
- Critical Accounting Estimates
- Recent Accounting Pronouncements

Overview

Graco designs, manufactures and markets systems and equipment used to pump, meter, mix and dispense a wide variety of fluids and coatings. The Company specializes in equipment for applications that involve difficult-to-handle materials with high viscosities, materials with abrasive or corrosive properties and multiple-component materials that require precise ratio control. Graco sells primarily through independent third-party distributors worldwide to industrial and contractor end users. Approximately half of our sales were outside of the United States in 2015. Graco's business is classified by management into three reportable segments, each responsible for product development, manufacturing, marketing and sales of their products.

Graco's key strategies include developing and marketing new products, leveraging products and technologies into additional, growing end-user markets, expanding distribution globally and completing strategic acquisitions that provide additional channel and technologies. Long-term financial growth targets accompany these strategies, including our expectation of 10 percent revenue growth and 12 percent consolidated net earnings growth. We continued to develop new products in each operating division that are expected to drive incremental sales growth, such as the development of chemical injection pumps used in oil and natural gas applications, as well as continued refresh and upgrades of existing product lines. Graco has made a number of strategic acquisitions that expand and complement organically developed products and new market and channel opportunities.

Manufacturing is a key competency of the Company. Our management team in Minneapolis provides strategic manufacturing expertise, and is also responsible for factories not fully aligned with a single division. We manufacture some of our products in Switzerland (Industrial segment), the United Kingdom (Process segment), the People's Republic of China ("P.R.C.") (all segments), Belgium (all segments), Romania (Industrial segment) and Brazil (Industrial segment). Our primary distribution facilities are located in the United States, Belgium, Switzerland, United Kingdom, P.R.C., Japan, Korea and Australia.

Divestiture

In April 2012, the Company purchased the finishing businesses of Illinois Tool Works Inc. The acquisition included finishing equipment operations, technologies and brands of the Powder Finishing and Liquid Finishing businesses. Results of the Powder Finishing businesses have been included in the Industrial segment since the date of acquisition.

Under terms of a hold separate order from the Federal Trade Commission, the Company did not have the power to direct the activities of the Liquid Finishing businesses that most significantly impacted the economic performance of those businesses. Consequently, we reflected our investment in the Liquid Finishing businesses as a cost-method investment on our balance sheet, and their results of operations were not consolidated with those of the Company.

In April 2015, the Company sold the Liquid Finishing business assets for a price of \$610 million cash. Held separate investment income includes the pre-tax gain on sale of \$150 million, net of transaction and other related expenses, including a \$7 million contribution to the Company's charitable foundation. Held separate investment income also includes dividends of \$42 million. Net earnings include after-tax gain and dividends totaling \$141 million (\$2.40 per diluted share). Dividends received from after-tax earnings of Liquid Finishing included in investment income totaled \$28 million in 2014 and \$28 million in 2013. No further Liquid Finishing dividends will be received.

Acquisitions

On January 20, 2015, the Company completed the acquisition of High Pressure Equipment Holdings, LLC ("HiP") for \$161 million cash. HiP designs and manufactures valves, fittings and other flow control equipment engineered to perform in ultra-high pressure

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environments. HiP's products and business relationships enhance Graco's position in the oil and natural gas industry and complement Graco's core competencies of designing and manufacturing advanced flow control technologies. Results of HiP operations have been included in the Company's Process segment from the date of acquisition.

On January 2, 2015, the Company acquired White Knight Fluid Handling ("White Knight") for \$16 million cash and a commitment for additional consideration if future revenues exceed certain thresholds, initially valued at \$8 million. The maximum payout is not limited. White Knight designs and manufactures high purity, metal-free pumps used in the production process of manufacturing semiconductors, solar panels, LED flat panel displays and various other electronics. Results of White Knight operations have been included in the Company's Process segment from the date of acquisition.

In October 2014, we acquired the stock of Alco Valves Group ("Alco") for £72 million cash. Alco is a United Kingdom based manufacturer of high quality, high pressure valves used in the oil and natural gas industry and in other industrial processes. Alco's products and business relationships enhance Graco's position in the oil and natural gas industry and complement Graco's core competencies of designing and manufacturing advanced flow control technologies. Results of Alco operations have been included in the Company's Process segment from the date of acquisition.

In January 2014, the Company paid \$65 million cash to acquire QED Environmental Systems ("QED"), a manufacturer of fluid management solutions for environmental monitoring and remediation, markets where Graco had little or no previous exposure. Results of operations have been included in the Company's Process segment from the date of acquisition.

The Company completed other business acquisitions in 2015, 2014 and 2013 that were not material to the consolidated financial statements.

Results of Operations

Net sales, operating earnings, net earnings and earnings per share were as follows (in millions except per share amounts):

	2015	2014	2013
Net Sales	\$1,286	\$1,221	\$1,104
Operating Earnings	302	309	280
Net Earnings	346	226	211
Diluted Net Earnings per Common Share	\$5.86	\$3.65	\$3.36

2015 Summary:

Net sales grew by 5 percent compared to 2014. At consistent currency translation rates, sales increased 10 percent, including growth from acquired operations of 6 percentage points and organic growth of 4 percentage points.

More than 90 percent of our organic growth at consistent translation rates in 2015 came from our Contractor and Industrial businesses in the Americas. Our Process segment has some exposure to oil and natural gas end markets, which limited organic growth at consistent translation rates in that segment to 1 percent.

Changes in currency translation rates reduced sales, operating earnings, and net earnings by approximately \$58 million, \$32 million and \$20 million, respectively.

Acquired operations contributed \$67 million of incremental sales in 2015.

Gross profit margin, expressed as a percentage of sales, was 53 percent for the year, slightly lower than 2014, mostly due to changes in currency translation rates. Favorable effects of realized pricing and lower material costs offset the impact of lower average gross margin rates of acquired operations.

Operating expenses increased \$25 million (7 percent) over 2014. Decreases from changes in currency translation rates (\$16 million) partially offset increases from acquired operations (\$27 million), spending related to regional and

product expansion initiatives (\$4 million) and unallocated corporate expenses (\$5 million).

Investment in new product development was \$59 million or 4½ percent of sales in 2015, consistent with 2014 expense as a percentage of sales.

- The effective tax rate for 2015 was 27 percent, down from 28 percent in 2014 primarily due to a change in our assertion with respect to the reinvestment of foreign earnings.

Net earnings include \$141 million of after-tax gain on the sale of Liquid Finishing business assets and \$42 million of dividends received prior to the sale. Dividends from Liquid Finishing totaled \$28 million in 2014.

Share repurchases totaled 3.9 million in 2015, driving a reduction of 2.7 million shares in the weighted average shares outstanding for diluted earnings per share.

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2014 Summary:

Net sales grew by 11 percent, representing growth in all reportable segments and regions, including double digit growth in the Americas.

Incremental sales from acquired operations totaled \$41 million for 2014, contributing 4 percentage points of the growth.

Changes in currency translation rates reduced sales and net earnings by approximately \$3 million and \$2 million, respectively.

- Gross profit margin, expressed as a percentage of sales, was 55 percent for the year, slightly lower than 2013 due to the effects of purchase accounting (\$2.5 million) and lower margins from acquired operations.

Investment in new product development was \$54 million or 4½ percent of sales in 2014.

Operating expenses increased \$30 million over 2013; approximately 75 percent of the increase relates to acquired operations and spending on regional and product growth initiatives.

Held separate investment (income), net included dividends received from the Liquid Finishing businesses. Dividends for 2014 and 2013 were \$28 million in each year.

The effective tax rate was 28 percent, up from 27 percent in 2013. The effective rate was lower in 2013 primarily because it included two years of federal R&D credit as the credit was reinstated in the first quarter of 2013 retroactive to the beginning of 2012.

Share repurchases totaled 2.6 million in 2014, driving a reduction of 1.0 million shares in weighted average shares outstanding for diluted earnings per share.

The following table presents net sales by geographic region (in millions):

	2015	2014	2013
Americas ¹	\$760	\$684	\$595
EMEA ²	291	305	283
Asia Pacific	235	232	226
Total	\$1,286	\$1,221	\$1,104

¹North, South and Central America, including the United States. Sales in the United States were \$654 million in 2015, \$577 million in 2014 and \$498 million in 2013.

²Europe, Middle East and Africa

In 2015, sales in the Americas increased by 11 percent, with increases of 6 percent in the Industrial segment, 17 percent in the Process segment and 13 percent in the Contractor segment as compared to the prior year. The Contractor segment continued to benefit from strong residential and commercial construction markets in the United States. Incremental sales from acquired operations totaled \$32 million in the Americas, contributing 5 percentage points of growth. The growth from acquisitions is included within the Industrial and Process segments. Excluding acquisitions, sales for the region grew by 6 percent.

In 2015, sales in EMEA decreased by 4 percent (increased 9 percent at consistent translation rates). An increase of 43 percent in the Process segment was offset by decreases in the Industrial segment of 12 percent (increase of 1 percent at consistent translation rates) and 10 percent (increase of 2 percent at consistent translation rates) in the Contractor segment. Incremental sales from acquired operations totaled \$20 million in EMEA, contributing 8 percentage points of growth. The growth from acquisitions is included within the Industrial and Process segments. Excluding acquisitions, sales for the region decreased by 12 percent (increased 1 percent at consistent translation rates). Sales growth in western and central Europe was offset by unfavorable currency translation rates for the euro and Swiss franc, and by declines in sales in Russia and the Middle East. While general industry and construction markets were generally stable in western Europe, weakness in oil and natural gas markets continued.

In 2015, sales in Asia Pacific increased by 1 percent (6 percent at consistent translation rates). Sales were flat (increase of 4 percent at consistent translation rates) in the Industrial segment. An increase of 22 percent (30 percent at

consistent translation rates) in the Process segment was partially offset by a decrease of 14 percent (9 percent at consistent translation rates) in the Contractor segment. Incremental sales from acquired operations totaled \$15 million in Asia Pacific, contributing 6 percentage points of growth. The growth from acquisitions is included within the Industrial and Process segments. Weakness in China offset growth in other countries, such as Australia, Korea, Japan and India. While general industry and process markets were stable in most of the region, weakness remained in industries such as mining, marine and general construction.

In 2014, sales in the Americas increased by 15 percent in total, with increases of 10 percent in the Industrial segment, 31 percent in the Process segment and 12 percent in the Contractor segment as compared to the prior year. Sales from acquired operations totaled \$32 million in the Americas, contributing 6 percentage points of growth. The growth from acquisitions is included within the Industrial and Process segments. The Contractor segment continued to benefit from the recovery of the U.S. residential and commercial construction markets. Sales in the Process segment reflected double digit growth in both vehicle service applications and industrial lubrication customers.

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In 2014, sales in EMEA increased by 8 percent. Sales in the Industrial segment increased by 6 percent, 20 percent in the Process segment and 5 percent in the Contractor segment. Growth in EMEA came primarily from the developed economies in the West. The emerging markets increased slightly over 2013, with gains in Eastern Europe and the Middle East partially offset by declines in Russia.

In 2014, sales in Asia Pacific grew by 3 percent. Sales increased by 2 percent in the Industrial segment, 5 percent in the Process segment and 3 percent in the Contractor segment. Sales in China grew by 3½ percent, with good growth in the automotive industry. However, we saw a lack of growth in a number of other markets throughout the region and also saw variability in bookings and billings by country and product line.

The following table presents components of net sales change:

	2015								
	Segment			Region					
	Industrial	Process	Contractor	Americas	Europe	Asia Pacific	Consolidated		
Volume and Price	3	% 1	% 9	% 7	% 1	% —	% 4	%	
Acquisitions	2	% 26	% —	% 5	% 8	% 6	% 6	%	
Currency	(6	)% (4	)% (3	)% (1	)% (13	)% (5	)% (5)%	
Total	(1	)% 23	% 6	% 11	% (4	)% 1	% 5	%

	2014								
	Segment			Region					
	Industrial	Process	Contractor	Americas	Europe	Asia Pacific	Consolidated		
Volume and Price	5	% 8	% 10	% 10	% 5	% 2	% 7	%	
Acquisitions	2	% 17	% —	% 6	% 2	% 2	% 4	%	
Currency	—	% (1	)% —	% (1	)% 1	%		